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ABSTRACT

The open-ended activities in this book are designed to extend the imagination and creativity of students and to encourage students to examine their feelings and values as influenced by the media. The activities focus upon the cognitive and affective pupil behaviors described in Williams' Model: fluent thinking; flexible thinking; original thinking; elaborative thinking; risk-taking; complexity; curiosity and imagination. The 57 activities are interdisciplinary in nature and include such topics as TV or movie characters as role models, newspaper slogans, criticism of commercials, eye witness accounts, game shows, and censorship. A final section provides suggestions for follow-up activities. (EH)

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CREATIVE VENTURES

The Media

Written by Rebecca Stark

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The Media

Written by Rebecca Stark

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To the Teacher

The open-ended activities in this book were designed to extend the imagination and creativity of your students and to encourage students to examine their feelings and values. Specifically, they focus upon the cognitive and affective pupil behaviors described in Williams' Model: fluent thinking, flexible thinking, original thinking, elaborative thinking, risk-taking, complexity, curiosity and imagination. (See the summary of Williams' Model on page 5.)

Students must learn to recognize problems and to produce and consider a variety of alternate solutions to those problems. Teachers, therefore, should urge students to defer judgment of their ideas until they have produced many alternatives. They should also encourage them to let their imaginations run wild so that their ideas include clever, unusual alternatives as well as the more obvious ones.

Each volume of the **CREATIVE VENTURES SERIES** centers around a different area; however, the area is broad and the nature of the activities is interdisciplinary.

I hope you and your students enjoy your ventures into creativity!

Rebecca Stark

A SUMMARY OF WILLIAMS' MODEL

COGNITIVE-INTELLECTIVE

Fluent thinking – to generate a great number of relevant responses.

Flexible thinking – to take different approaches in order to generate different categories of thought.

Original thinking – to think in novel or unique ways in order to produce unusual responses and clever ideas.

Elaborative thinking – to add on to, or embellish upon, an idea.

AFFECTIVE-FEELING

Risk-taking – to have courage to expose yourself to failure or criticism and to defend your ideas.

Complexity – to be challenged to seek alternatives and to delve into intricate problems or ideas.

Curiosity – to be inquisitive and to be willing to follow hunches just to see what will happen.

Imagination – to feel intuitively and to reach beyond sensual or real boundaries.

Role Models

Often, the characters we see on television or in the movies become our role models. List five TV or movie characters or stars whom your parents would like you to use as role models. Then list five whom they'd prefer you didn't imitate. Give the two or three most important traits that caused you to include them in these lists.

My parents would want me to use... **because of these traits:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

My parents wouldn't want me to use... **because of these traits:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Would any of these change if the lists were written from your point of view? If yes, explain.

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Newspaper Slogans

The *New York Times* has the slogan, "All the news that's fit to print." Think of as many slogans as you can for a local, school or national newspaper. Try to think of some unusual ones!

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

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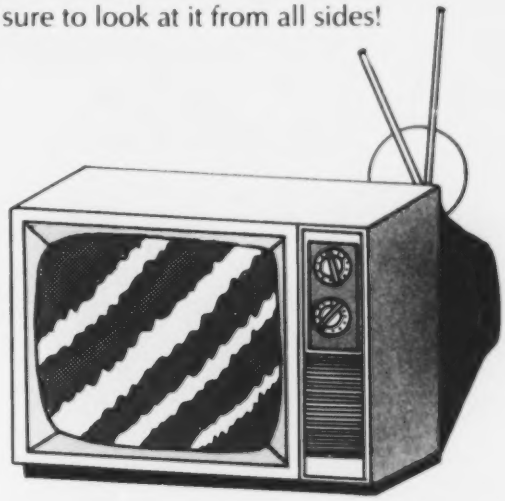
Don't Throw Me Away!

Think of as many uses for a broken television set as you can. Be creative and try to think of some unusual ideas! Be sure to look at it from all sides!



1.

2.

3.

Draw a picture of your most unusual idea.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

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Super Similes

What are the traits of a good newspaper reporter? Be creative and try to think of original similes.

A good newspaper reporter is ...

as smart as _____.

as quick as _____.

as honest as_____.

as persistent as_____.

as brave as _____.

as curious as _____.

Add some more of your own.

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A Dilemma

You are in charge of getting clients to advertise over a particular radio station. You believe that a potential client's product is unsafe! You know that the account would bring in a lot of money to the station, however. What are your alternatives?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Now put a * next to the alternative you would choose.

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Computer-generated Stars

In 1986 Max Headroom became the first major computer-generated television personality.

What are the advantages of a having a computer-generated TV star? Try to think of this question from a few different points of view.

What are the disadvantages?

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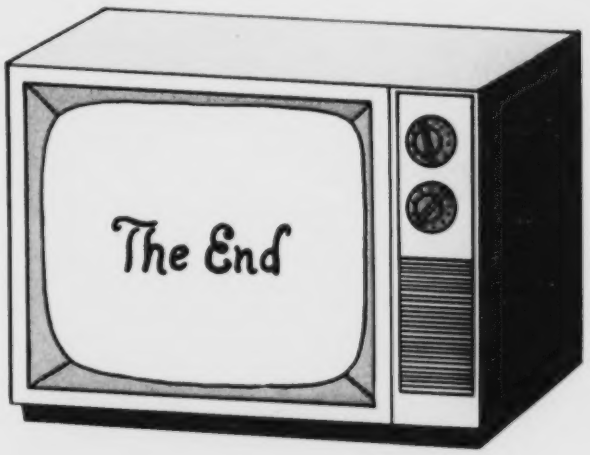
Endings

Think about an episode of a situation comedy you've recently watched.

Summarize the plot:

How did it end?



Now think of as many alternate endings as you can:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Put a * next to the one you like best.

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Awards

Every year television honors the performers, directors, writers and other people in the industry with the *Emmy Awards*. The movie industry honors members of its association with *Academy Awards*, or *Oscars*.

Think of some unusual categories not now included in the *Emmy Awards* or *Academy Awards*.

1. Best actress in a semi-serious show seen on alternate Mondays.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

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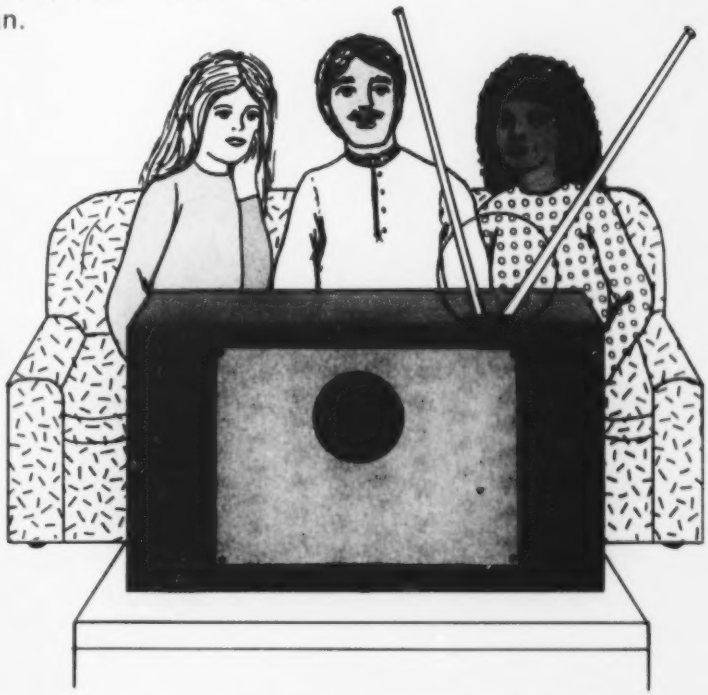
Nicknames

Whether it deserves the nickname or not, television is often referred to as the "boob tube." Think of as many other nicknames for television as you can.



1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

16

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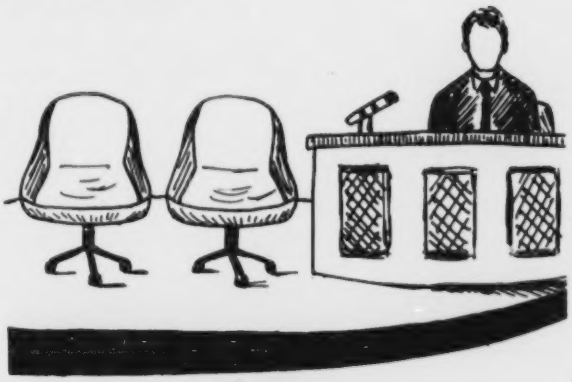
I'd Like to Know



It is some time in the future.You have been asked to host a TV show in which you will interview famous personalities. Because of a new development in time travel, your guests can come from the past, present or future time periods.

Choose someone in each of the following fields. List the questions you would like to ask each person.

Politics: _____

Sports or Entertainment: _____

Science: _____

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Commercial Critic

Have you ever criticized a commercial? Have you ever said, "I could make a better commercial than that"?

Choose a commercial you've seen on TV. In what ways would you change it to make it more effective?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Draw a picture that illustrates your changes.

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What Happened Here?

You are a reporter for a newspaper. You have just come across this scene. What questions will you ask to find out what has happened? Ask questions that give information you cannot learn just by looking at the scene.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Now answer your questions. Based upon what you have answered, write an article describing the situation.

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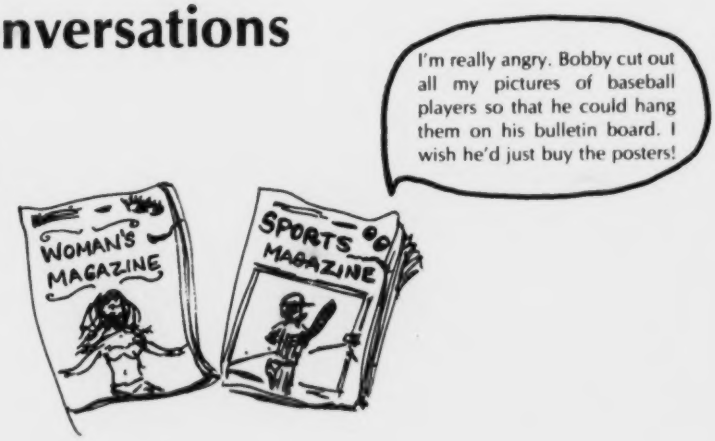
Conversations

Suppose magazines could talk to one another! Write conversations that might take place between the magazines on your shelves or table tops.


I'm really angry. Bobby cut out all my pictures of baseball players so that he could hang them on his bulletin board. I wish he'd just buy the posters!
WOMAN'S MAGAZINE
SPORTS MAGAZINE

Conversation 1: Between _____ and _____

Conversation 2: Between _____ and _____

Conversation 3: Between _____ and _____

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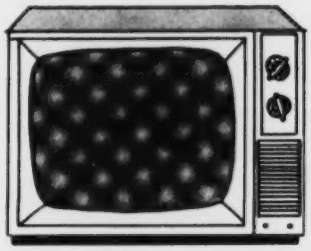
TV- _____

What are the attributes, or qualities, of a TV set? List as many as you can. Keep in mind such qualities as size, color, weight, material, shape and function.



Now replace some of these attributes with others. Explain the changes.

Draw a picture of your creation in the box.

Think of some new names for your new product.

Did your changes improve the TV set in any way?

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Psychic Reporter

A TV news reporter suddenly acquires the ability to foresee the future. What problems might this create?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

22

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Dear Editor:

Write a letter to the editor about smoking in public places from the point of view of a smoker.

Dear Editor,

Sincerely,

Now write a letter about this issue from the point of view of a non-smoker.

Dear Editor,

Sincerely,

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Exciting Landing

It is some time in the future and the first human has just landed on Mars. Think of some unusual and exciting headlines that might appear on the front pages of the next day's newspaper. List them below.

Choose the headline that you like best. Write the lead paragraph for the article describing the event.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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My Lips Are Sealed

Write a conversation between a reporter who has been put in jail for refusing to divulge his or her source of information and a member of his or her family trying to convince the reporter to name the source.

Reporter:

Family Member:

Reporter:

Family Member:

Reporter:

Family Member:

Reporter:

What would you do if you were the reporter?

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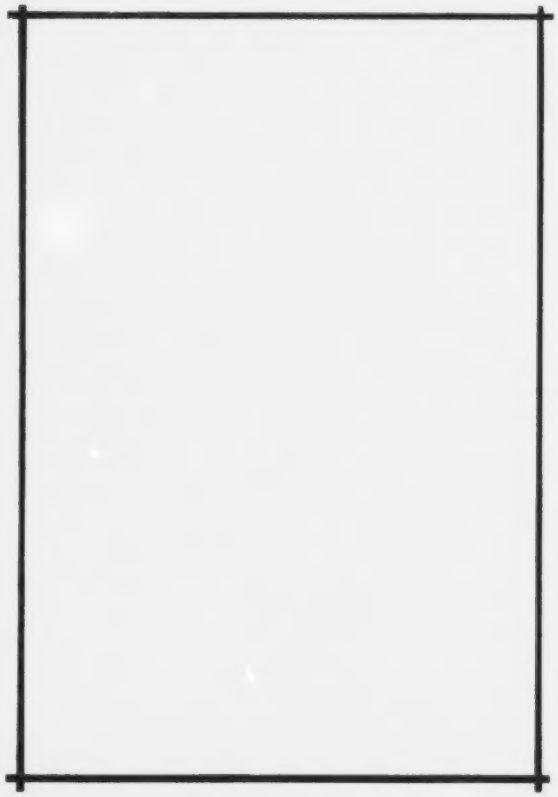
Spread the News!

Suppose there were no newspapers, magazines, television sets or radios. In what ways could we spread news? Try to think of some unusual ideas!

Sketch pictures that illustrate your best ideas.



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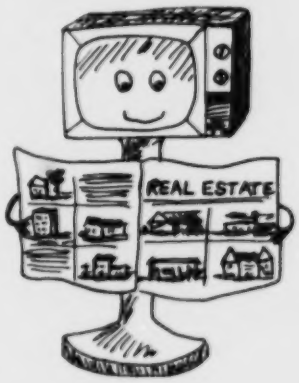
If I Were a TV

Imagine that you are a television set. Describe how you would feel under each of the following circumstances.

In a house filled with preteens



With an owner who kicks you when you don't work

In the White House

In the garden apartment of a newly married couple

In the home of a self-centered movie star

In a limousine

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Behind the Headlines

Headlines get our attention, but they don't tell the whole story. How many different events can you think of to explain each of the following headlines? Try to think of original ideas. Don't be afraid to be outlandish!

Hamster Saves the Day!

State of Delaware Limits Number of Visitors!

Volleyball Outlawed in Smallville!

Movie Theater Evacuated!

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Create a Magazine

You have been hired by a publisher to create a new magazine. What kinds of articles will you include that will make it different from other magazines now being published?

What are some possible names for your new magazine?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Who will buy your magazine?

1.

2.

3.

Who will advertise in your magazine?

1.

2.

3.

4.

Put a * next to the name you like best.

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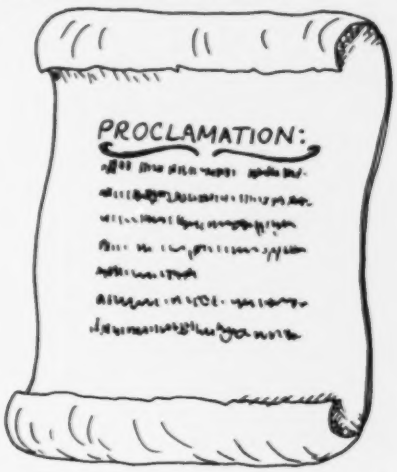
Now What Do We Do?

The governor of your state has just issued an order to ban all radio and television for a month. (Assume he or she has the power to do this.) What will you, your family and your friends do for entertainment? Think of some things you might do that are out of the ordinary.



How does the governor's order make you feel?

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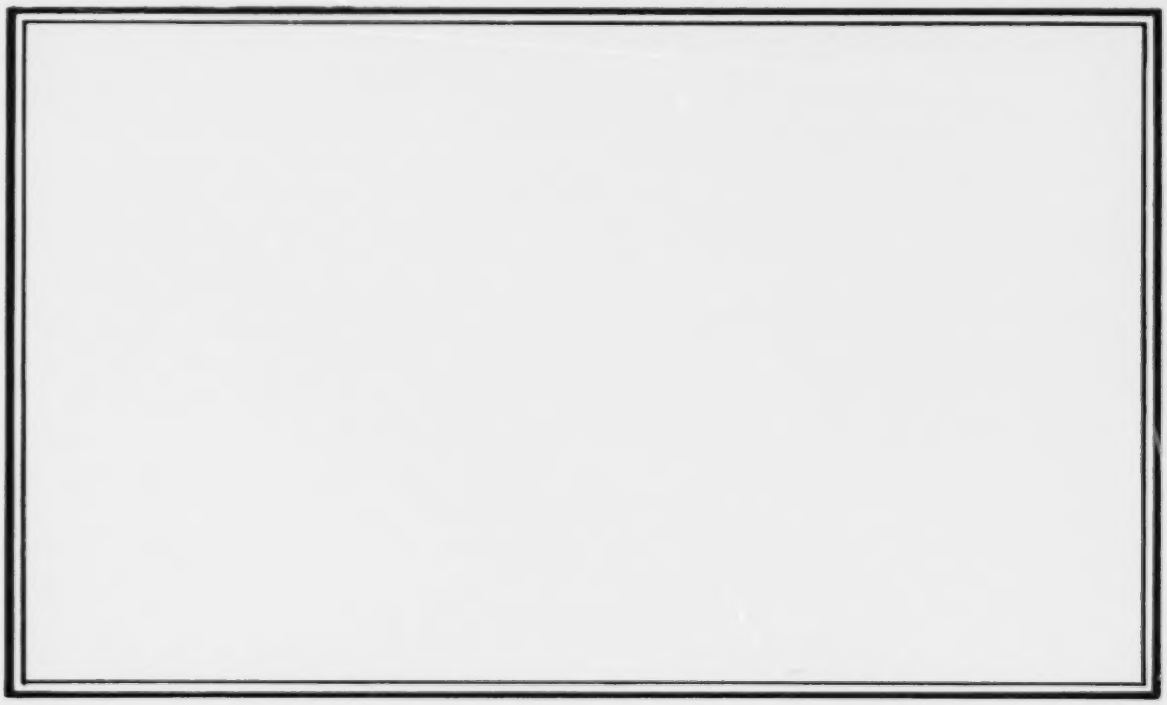
A TV's-eye View

Describe a room in your house from the perspective of your television set or your radio.

Now draw a picture of the room from the perspective you just described.



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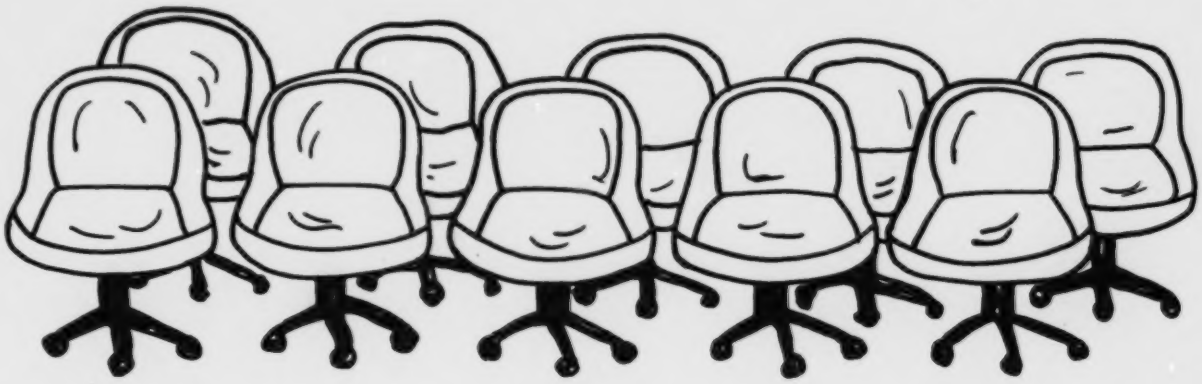
Where Is Everyone?



The President of the United States of America has called a press conference. No one shows up! What possible events or conditions could account for the situation?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

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Future Headlines

Create possible headlines for articles in a newspaper of the 25th Century in each of the following areas.

Politics

Sports

Business

Entertainment

Travel

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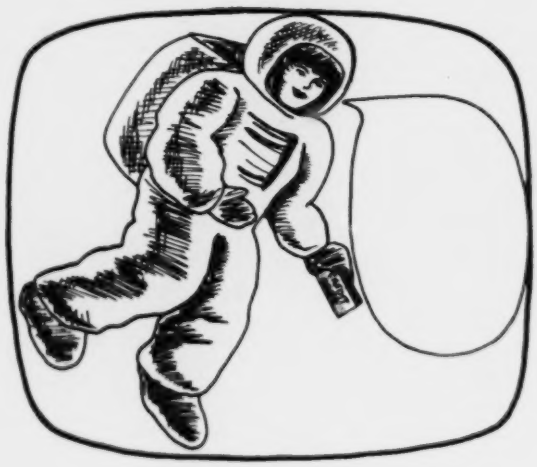
Advertising Slogans

Write advertising slogans to fit the visual portion of the ad. Then fill in the bubble with the slogan you like best.



In each screen draw a picture of a new product that might fit this slogan: "The most revolutionary development since the toothbrush!"

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Spend It Fast!

You have just won a million dollars on a game show called *Spend It Fast!*. The rules state that you must spend all of the money within a week! How will you spend it?

List all the goods and services you will buy.

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Programming Decisions

Suppose you were made the head of one of the major television networks. List all the things you would do to improve programming!

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Perhaps you'd like to submit a few of your ideas to one of the networks!

ABC-TV
1330 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019

CBS-TV
51 West 52nd Street
New York, NY 10019

NBC-TV
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10020

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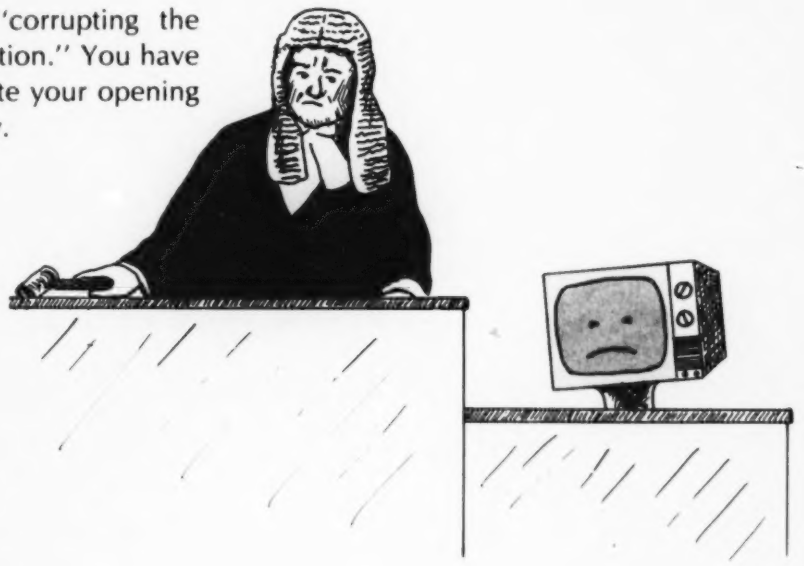
TV on Trial

Television is on trial for "corrupting the morals of the younger generation." You have been asked to defend it. Write your opening or closing remarks to the jury.



Now write the opening or closing remarks of the district attorney.

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I've Been Meaning to Tell You

If your TV could talk,
what would it say ...

To you?

To your mother?

To your father?

To your brother or sister?

To your best friend?

To your pet?

To your teacher?

To your radio?

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Not Another Game Show!

Create a new TV game show.

Number of contestants:

Object of the game:

Prizes:

Rules:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Possible Names:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Put a * next to the most original name.

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Buy Me!

List the human qualities to which advertisers try to appeal.

Choose a product that you have recently purchased. Write slogans or jingles for it that appeal to each of the qualities listed above.

40

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Strange Co-stars

What if these characters got lost and ended up on the wrong shows? Let your imagination run wild and write as many different ideas as you can.

What would Big Bird of *Sesame Street* say if he met the Lone Ranger?

What would Radar of *Mash* say if he met Frankenstein?

What would Mr. Spock of *Star Trek* say if he met Peewee Herman?

What would Ralph Kramden of *The Honeymooners* say if he met Captain Kirk of *Star Trek*?

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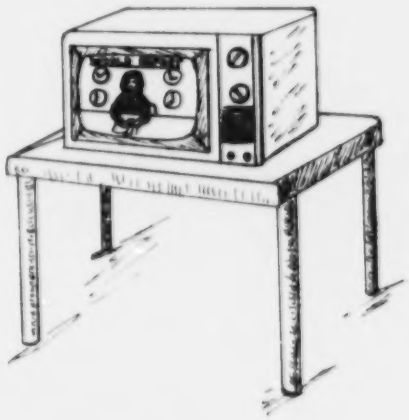
Earth-shaking Event

You turn on the television just in time to hear the end of the news broadcast. The anchorwoman ends her broadcast in the following way: "...and so, the world – no the universe – will never be the same again."

What might have happened to cause her to say that? Think hard and list as many possible reasons as you can.



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Is This for Real?

Some movies give a realistic view of the society they attempt to portray. Some do not.

Distorted View

List several movies you have seen which you think give a distorted view of the segment of society they attempt to portray.

Realistic View

List several movies you have seen which you think give a realistic view of the segment of society they attempt to portray.

Think of at least six other names for one of the movies listed above.

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Tattletale?

You are a reporter for the school newspaper. You have been asked to report on the increase in shoplifting in the local stores. You learn that one of your best friends has been shoplifting. Although you know that shoplifting is a crime, you are afraid of losing his or her friendship. You are also afraid of being called a tattletale by your other friends.

What are your alternatives?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Now put a * next to the alternative you would choose.

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How Would It Feel?

How would it feel to be...

The only black & white TV set in a store filled with colored sets?

A teenager's radio on an island with no electricity or batteries?

A TV magazine in a home with five boys aged 10 through 15?

The magazine of a teenage girl as she works on her scrapbook or photo album and uses you as a resource.

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The Twilight Zone

One of the most imaginative television series was *The Twilight Zone*. Think of as many possible plots as you can to submit to the producer of that show. Be imaginative!

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Choose your most original and entertaining idea. Elaborate on it and write a detailed description of the storyline.

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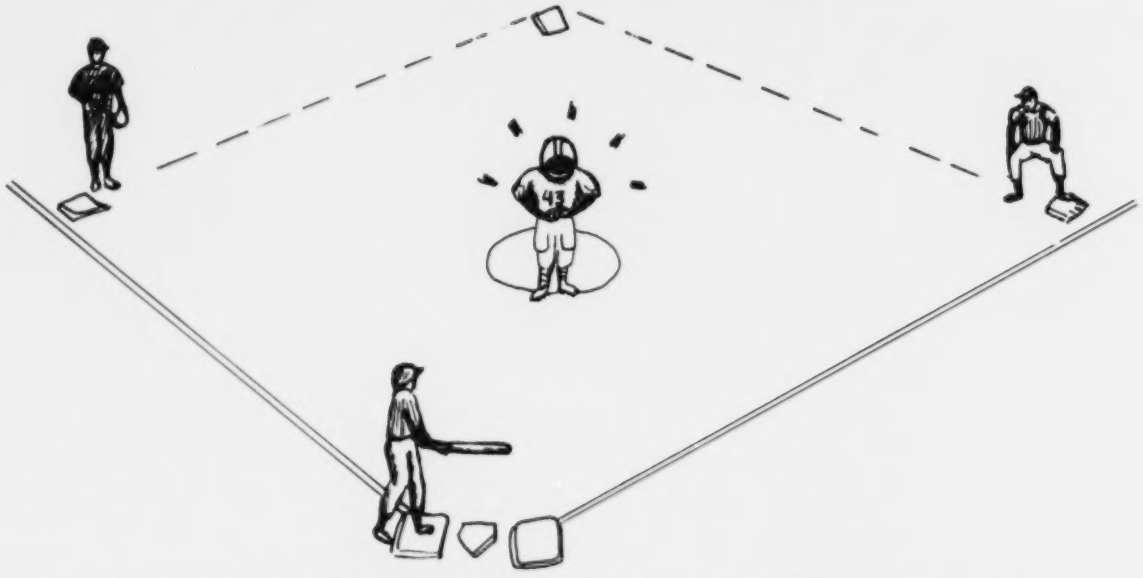
Something's Wrong Here!



You turn on your TV set to watch your favorite baseball team. This is what you see. You call the studio to find out what is going on at the stadium. What questions will you ask to get information you cannot get just by looking at the picture on your screen?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

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Spinoffs

One of the ways in which TV executives try to ensure high ratings is to take a popular supporting character from one hit show and to create a spinoff – a new show with that character as the main character. Think of the shows that are currently on television (popular or not!). What possible spinoffs could be created? Try to think of several alternate plots and names for your new shows!

	Character	Old Show	New Plot	New Name
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

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Eye Witness

Television allows many people to view events that they otherwise would not have the opportunity to witness. Try to think of the special historic, political, sporting and scientific events you have witnessed because of television. List them.

1.

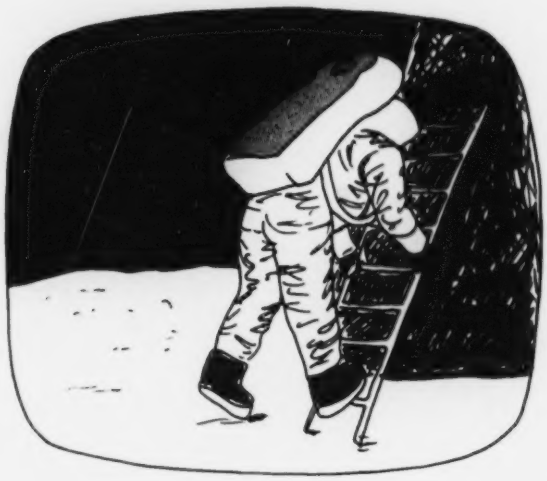
2.

3.

4.

5.

6.



Which was most inspiring?_____

_____

Which was most terrifying?_____

_____

Which was most amusing?_____

_____

Which was most unusual?_____

_____

Which most changed your life?_____

_____

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This Is Your Life...

It is 25 years from now. A famous producer has decided to do a movie based upon your life. Why?

List the accomplishments that influenced the producer's decision to base the movie upon your life.

Whom would you like to see in the title role?

_____, _____ or _____

Put a * next to your first choice.

Write a blurb for the entertainment section of a newspaper summarizing the plot.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Soap Operas: 2500A.D.

It is the year 2500 and people are still engrossed in soap operas, but the themes have changed! List possible themes for a soap opera of the future.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

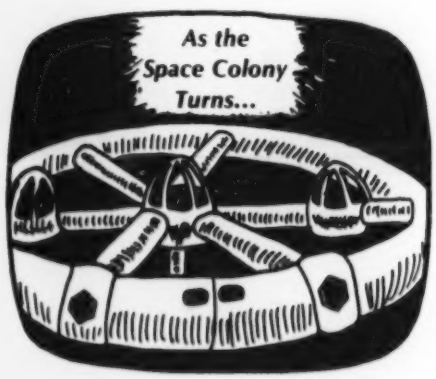
Put a * next to the theme you like best.

Describe and name three characters that might be part of that soap opera.

1.

2.

3.



Summarize the plot of one episode.

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What's the Scoop?

You are a reporter and arrive at this scene. Write questions about this scene that cannot be answered merely by looking at the picture.

1. 3.

2. 4.

Guess what might have led up to what we see in the picture.

1. 3.

2. 4.

What are some possible consequences of what we see in the picture?

1. 3.

2. 4.

52

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Acrostics

An acrostic is a poem in which the first letter of each line spells a word or a message.

Write an acrostic poem about television.

TELEVISION

T _____

E _____

L _____

E _____

V _____

I _____

S _____

I _____

O _____

N _____

Now write an acrostic poem about radio.

RADIO

R _____

A _____

D _____

I _____

O _____

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Interesting Interviews

You have been asked to replace Barbara Walters (renowned for her skillful interviewing). On your next television special you will have to interview the following people. Create at least five relevant questions to ask each of these persons.

The first human being to set foot on Mars.

The winner of the National Teacher of the Year Award.

The winner of the Nobel Prize for Medicine.

A five-year-old who rescued his or her family from a fire.

Rate your questions. Were they polite, relevant and thought-provoking?

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Circumstances Beyond Our Control

Due to circumstances beyond our control, all television networks will cease broadcasting at this time. Broadcasting will resume in one month. Please tune in at that time.

You are watching your favorite TV show when suddenly the above message appears on the screen. You try the other channels and see the same message on each. After a few minutes the screen goes blank.

Use your imagination and list all the possible reasons for this occurrence.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

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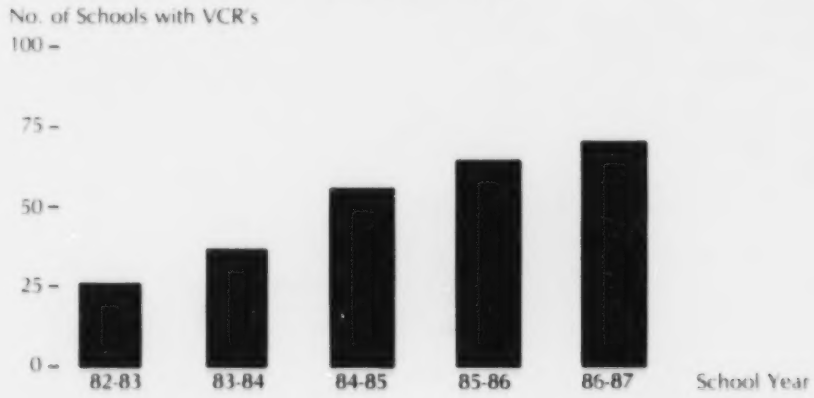
Trends

The number of public schools using VCR's for instruction in October 1986 was about 70,000. That was 8 percent higher than the previous year. This is a trend.

Video Trends



What are some other trends?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Choose one of your trends and draw a picture of how it will affect people.

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World Premiere

Create a new television program.

Into what category would you classify your program: mystery, situation comedy, talk show, game show, news and/or documentary or another?

How is your program different from others in that category?

Whom would you like to star in your program?

What sponsors might be interested in it? Why?

What are all the things you could do to advertise the program before its premiere? Be creative! Draw a picture of one of your ideas.

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Dear Becky...

Suppose these responses were given to problems described in a personal advice columm of a newspaper. Use your imagination to create possible situations that might have led to these responses.

Two wrongs don't make a right!

Take out a full page ad in the paper and beg for forgiveness.

Seating them next to each other might provoke a riot!

Maybe you should move away and change your identity!

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T-V Drawings

See how many pictures of objects you can make from the letters T and V.

T V T

V T V

T V T

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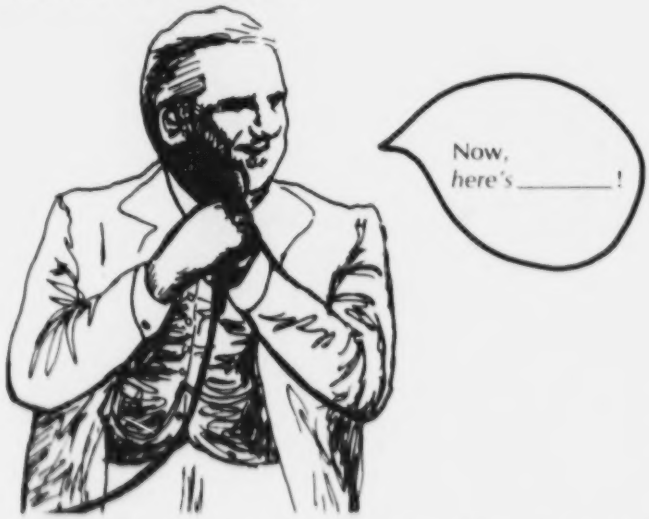
Here's...

You have been asked to find a replacement for Johnny Carson as host of *The Tonight Show*. List the qualities of a good talk show host. Think hard to include those that are not so obvious.



Now think of a person, famous or not, who has all or most of those qualities. As that person, write a letter asking for the job. Explain in the letter why you think you are qualified.

Dear Producer,

Sincerely,

60

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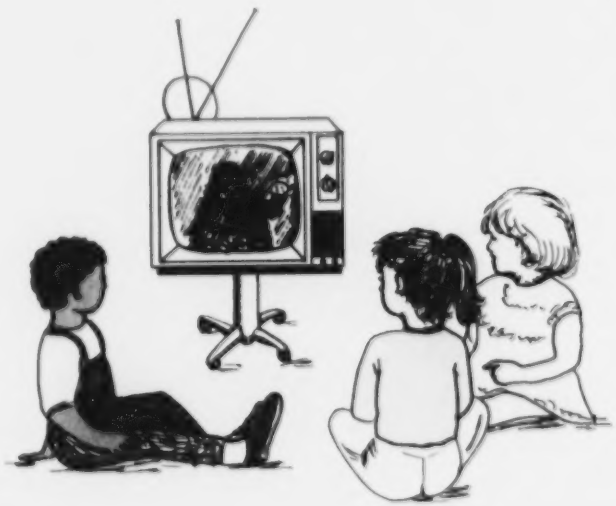
Rated "G"

Compile a list of programs that are currently on TV that are appropriate and worthy of viewing by kindergarten-aged children.



Now think of ideas for programs which are not currently on TV that you feel would be worthwhile for this age group.

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Character Combos

List the traits of two television characters. They may be from the same or different series.

Character No. 1

Character No.2

Now combine their outstanding traits to create a new character. Give him or her a name. Tell why you chose the particular traits to combine. Describe the general plot of the series which will feature your new character.

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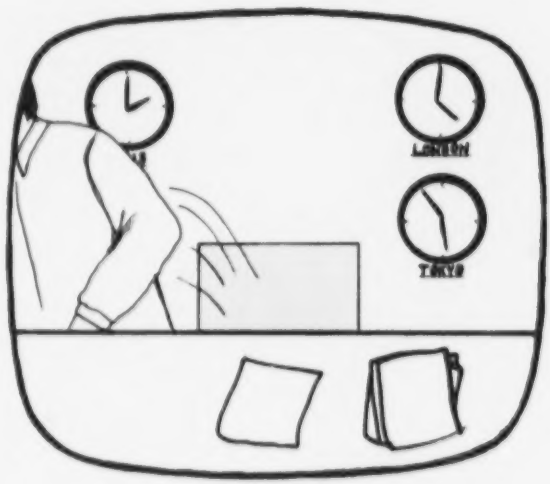
I've Had It!

In the middle of a news broadcast, the anchorperson of a major TV network announces that he's had enough and that he no longer wishes to continue in his position. He gets up and leaves right in the middle of the broadcast! Be imaginative and propose several possible reasons for his sudden resignation.



1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

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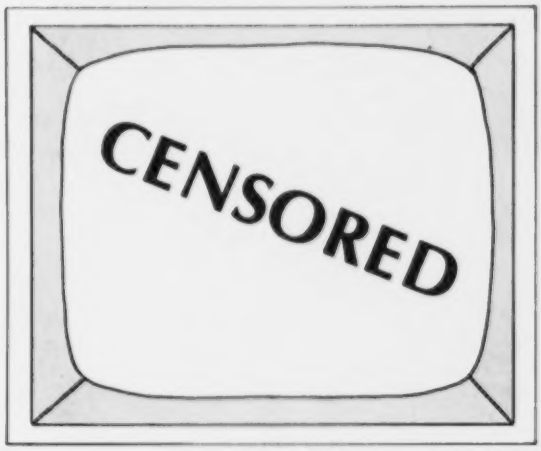
Censored

In August 1985 the BBC (British Broadcasting Company) canceled a documentary about Northern Ireland after having been pressured by Home Secretary Leon Brittan to do so. Although Brittan had not even seen the program, he was concerned about allowing extremists to express their views. At the time of the crisis, Director General of the BBC, Alasdair Milne, was on a cruise ship; the show was withdrawn before he could return. A month later, under the leadership of Milne, the BBC governors reversed their decision and the film was aired with only minor changes.



Write letters to the editor of a newspaper concerning this particular censorship issue from three points of view: Home Secretary Leon Brittan, BBC Director Alasdair Milne and a member of the viewing public.

Dear Editor,

Dear Editor,

Dear Editor,

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Follow-up Activities

1. Describe how your life would be different if television had never been invented.

2. Compare and contrast newspapers, magazines, radio and television as news sources. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

3. How can mass media be used to combat such problems as alcohol and drug abuse? What can be done that isn't being done now?

4. Evaluate this statement: "Mass media is controlled by a very few people and yet these people dictate our tastes, our wants and even our values." Do you agree or disagree with the statement?

5. Read the coverage of a current event in 3 different newspapers. Was it presented in a similar way in each? Did you get a different impression of the facts after reading any of them? How did they differ?

6. Discuss the conflict between the public's right to know and the individual's right to privacy.

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7. In 1787 Thomas Jefferson wrote: "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without a newspaper or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate to prefer the latter." Do you agree with his choice? Do you think he would make the same choice today?

8. Watch several news broadcasts on television. Was the news presented in a fair, unbiased manner? If not, give examples of how the broadcaster inserted personal feelings into the report.

9. Do you think that there is too much violence in television shows and motion pictures? Do you think the violence affects the behavior of the viewers? Do you think the amount of violence allowed on public television should be regulated?

10. Is it stealing to receive Pay TV shows without paying for them?

11. Read several political cartoons. Then create your own cartoon that comments on a current controversial issue. Try to make your cartoon humorous.

12. Predict how many hours of television you will have watched by the time you're thirty.

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